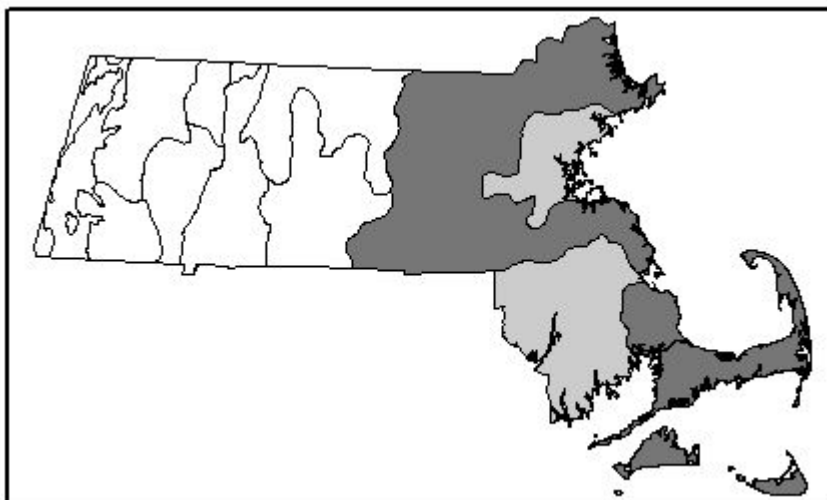


Community Name: MARITIME EROSIONAL CLIFF COMMUNITY

Community Code: CT2B1E0000

SRANK: S2



Concept: Extremely sparse vegetation on cliffs being actively eroded by the sea.

Environmental Setting: Seaward unconsolidated cliff faces, subject to erosion, particularly in storms. In the salt spray zone, above beach strand communities. Vegetation is most diverse where freshwater seepage emerges through the bluff. Clay and sand substrates may support different communities, needs inventory.

Vegetation Description: Vegetation typical of surrounding areas, but usually very sparse: Poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*), Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), wild rose (*Rosa carolina* and *R. rugosa*), bayberry (*Myrica pensylvanica*), sweet fern (*Comptonia peregrina*), beach plum (*Prunus maritima*), black cherry (*Prunus serotina*), huckleberry (*Gaylussacia baccata*), bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*), and catbriar (*Smilax rotundifolia*). In areas with freshwater seepage, common horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*) and the non-native Orache (*Atriplex patula*) will often grow.

Associations:

Habitat Values for Associated Fauna: Tiger beetles are characteristic animals of the base of the community. Bank Swallows (*Riparia riparia*) nest in the top parts of the cliffs. Migrating Peregrine Falcons (*Falco peregrinus*) regularly perch on and hunt from the upper part of sea cliffs during the fall migration.

Associated Rare Plants:

PRENANTHES SERPENTARIA	LION'S FOOT	E
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Associated Rare Animals:

CICINDELA LIMBALIS	BANK TIGER BEETLE	SC
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Examples with Public Access: Martha's Vineyard; Nantucket; Cape Cod; NoMan's Island; Penikese Island WS, Gosnold.

Threats: Bank stabilization interferes with natural processes of erosion. But erosion becomes severe with added human induced disturbance, including from foot traffic and climbing.

Management Needs: Continuing to keep pedestrian traffic off cliff faces.

Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

Synonyms

USNVC/TNC: Not described as such , but might fit within Small eroding cliffs/banks sparse vegetation alliance; also Smilax spp. Toxicodendron radicans vine-Shrubland Alliance -- Smilax glauca - Toxicodendron radicans Vine Shrubland [CEGL003886].

MA (old name): Maybe part of Coastal Dunes.

ME: INCLUDES Maritime Shrubland Community.

NH: Related to: 1997 - Maritime Dune Forest/Woodland and 1994 - Coastal Dune Community.

VT: Not applicable.

NY: includes part of: Maritime dunes and Maritime shrubland (being revised, 2000).

CT: Possibly not present or maybe Terrestrial Scarcely Vegetated Erosional Slope or Terrestrial Scarcely Vegetated Sand Accumulations.

RI: Maritime Cliff.

Weatherbee: Not applicable.

Author: P. Swain

Date: 1/14/00